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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6921

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000984

SIPDIS

EUR/FO FOR GARBER, EUR/CE FOR PIERANGELO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/24/2018

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SUBJECT: POLAND ASKING WHAT'S NEXT? RESPONSE TO GEORGIA
DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 89769

Classified By: DCM Quanrud. Reason 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In an August 22 meeting with DCM, Polish National Security Advisor Wladyslaw Stasiak commended the creation of the NATO Commission on Georgia as "a good first step," but had little to offer in terms of Polish thinking on follow-up, despite President Kaczynski demonstrated flair for dramatic gestures. On Ukraine, Stasiak supported accelerated NATO membership, but commented that Ukraine must also resolve its internal political problems. Echoing Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski's recent statements on Afghanistan, Stasiak said the situation requires not just short-term deployment planning, but also long-term nation-building, as has been carried out in Iraq. He invited USG participation in a series of regional seminars Poland will host this fall on Polish military modernization, which Posts is following up on. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On August 22, DCM delivered reftel points to Wladyslaw Stasiak, the head of the Polish National Security Office (BBN), under the Presidential Chancellery. DCM expressed USG gratitude to Poland for its leadership in the crisis in Georgia, especially among the EU countries, and condolences on the death of three Polish soldiers in Afghanistan on August 20. Stasiak echoed the Polish government's satisfaction with the signing of the Missile Defense Shield Agreement BMDA.

Georgia

¶3. (C) The GoP was pleased with the results of the North Atlantic Council meeting in Brussels, according to Stasiak, but asked what NATO and the newly created commission will do specifically. Stasiak considers NATO and EU support to be mostly "in principle" at this point, and called for an implementation plan, although he had little to offer on that score from the Polish side. NATO MAP is a key step for Georgia because it is a sign of the country's importance to its allies. Although cognizant of Germany's hesitation regarding MAP for Georgia, Stasiak was cautiously optimistic that German support may be possible. The GoP plans to keep its pressure up on Germany, but the USG continues to have better leverage with the Germans.

Ukraine

¶4. (C) Stasiak said he agrees with FM Sikorski that Ukraine's NATO membership should be accelerated, but also worries that the Ukraine must resolve its internal political problems. Ukraine's oligarchs have helped westernize the country (out of a desire to preserve their wealth), but "they are not always reliable." Some Ukrainians are leery of NATO membership because of years of Soviet indoctrination, while most Ukrainians embrace the idea of EU membership. Stasiak

did not present any specific plan to help the GoU prepare for NATO membership or to focus on good governance, but did point to ongoing Polish outreach efforts to try and bring elite opinion around.

Afghanistan

15. (C) On Afghanistan, Stasiak was emphatic that Poland is there to succeed and that the NATO countries must be 100 percent committed to the cause. Echoing recent public statements by FM Sikorski, Stasiak said the most important issue right now is a long-term vision; he called specifically for a nation-building effort in Afghanistan looking forward to a secure future, similar to what he said is being done in Iraq, and not just the short-term issues of troop deployment numbers and locations.

Modernization

16. (C) The Polish government sees the Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement as part of a larger plan for modernization of its military. Recently, internal debate has focused on the shift to a voluntary force, and the question of how large the Polish army should be. The most critical issue, according to Stasiak, is not the total number of soldiers, but whether the military is well-equipped, well-trained, mobile and efficient. Poland is already planning some military modernization seminars this fall with Ukraine and other regional partners, and invited the USG to participate and share its experience in this field.

WARSAW 00000984 002 OF 002

Comment

17. (C) Given the number of internal disagreements within the Polish government, especially on foreign policy issues, there is an unusual consensus at this time on the positives of the missile defense agreement and the US role in Polish defense modernization. There is equal consensus on the need to provide support for Georgia and minimize the risks that the Ukraine faces from Russia. Stasiak was blunt about the Russian government's reaction to the BMDA and Patriot missiles in Poland -- it is a "psychological problem" and the Russian government needs to "break out" of its current state of mind for the good of its people and everyone else. Stasiak repeated several times that agreement in principle with the U.S. on Georgia, Ukraine and Afghanistan is not enough - but is looking to the USG for what will be the shape of things to come.

ASHE